



CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK

CITY PLANNING BOARD

ROOM 302, WATERTOWN CITY HALL
245 WASHINGTON STREET
WATERTOWN, NEW YORK 13601-3380
(315) 785-7730

Meeting: November 3, 2009

Present:

Sara Freda, Acting Chairperson
Lori Gervera
James Valianos
Randy Fipps
Alan Harris

Also:

Kenneth A. Mix, Planning & Community
Development Coordinator
Michael A. Lumbis, Planner
Justin Wood, Civil Engineer

Absent:

Norman J. Wayte II, Chairman
Sarah Warner

The November 3, 2009, Planning Board meeting was called to order at 1:32 p.m. by Acting Chairperson Sara Freda. Mrs. Freda called for a reading of the Minutes of the October 6, 2009, meeting. Mr. Harris moved to accept the Minutes as written and the motion was seconded by Mr. Valianos. All were in favor.

SUBDIVISION REQUEST – 1346 RICHARDS DRIVE, PARCEL NO. 14-19-107.006

The Planning Board considered a request for subdivision final plat approval submitted Patsy Storino on behalf of John and Gail Butterfield for a two lot subdivision of Parcel No. 14-19-107.006 located at 1346 Richards Drive. In attendance to represent proposed subdivision was Patsy Storino.

Mr. Storino began by providing an overview of the subdivision proposal. He stated that the owner of Parcel No. 14-19-107.006, Elizabeth Schings, is proposing to subdivide a portion of her property and sell it to the adjacent owners, Don and Gail Butterfield. Referring to a copy of the subdivision map, Mr. Storino said that the portion denoted as Parcel B would be subdivided from the main parcel owned by Ms. Schings and would be combined with Parcel A owned by the Butterfields. He said that he has prepared a description assembling the subdivided parcel with the main parcel owned by the Butterfields since the subdivided parcel would be too small to be a stand alone parcel per the zoning ordinance.

Mrs. Freda stated that a public hearing had been scheduled for this proposed subdivision request. Mrs. Freda then called the public hearing to order at 1:35 p.m. and read the legal notice that had been published in the *Watertown Daily Times*. After reading the notice, Mrs. Freda asked if there were any public comments on the proposed subdivision request. Hearing none, she closed the public hearing at 1:36 p.m.

Mrs. Freda then noted that the Planning Board needed to complete Part II of the Short Environmental Assessment Form. Mrs. Freda and the Planning Board then completed Part II, answering “no” to all questions. Mrs. Gervera then moved to issue a negative declaration for the proposed subdivision of Parcel No. 14-19-107.006 located at 1346 Richards Drive according to the requirements of SEQRA. The motion was seconded by Mr. Valianos and all voted in favor.

Mr. Valianos then moved to grant subdivision final plat approval for the request submitted by Patsy A. Storino on behalf of Don and Gail Butterfield for a two lot subdivision of Parcel No. 14-19-107.006 located at 1346 Richards Drive contingent upon the following:

1. That parcels A and B shown on the subdivision final plat be combined by way of a new metes and bounds description that is filed with the County Clerk.

The motion was seconded by Mrs. Gervera and all voted in favor.

**SPECIAL USE PERMIT REQUEST – 804 STATE STREET,
PARCEL NO. 12-06-322.000**

The Planning Board then considered a request submitted by Mark Bonner for a Special Use Permit to allow an auto sales lot and auto detailing operation at 804 State Street, Parcel No. 12-06-322.000. In attendance to represent the proposed request was the property owner, Mark Bonner, Gerard Deroshia, who will be operating the used car sales lot and Brian Sweet who will be operating the auto detailing portion of the business.

Mr. Bonner began by stating that he is applying for a Special Use Permit to operate a used car sales lot at 804 State Street. He said that they are planning no structural changes to the building at this time and that originally the building was designed as a car repair and servicing operation, and the proposed use is in keeping with that previous operation. He stated that they will be selling used cars and providing an auto detailing service at the site. He said that the new operation will not offer auto repair.

Mr. Valianos inquired about the proposed door replacement and wondered if they were overhead doors or the man doors. Mr. Bonner replied that they are replacing the man doors only and that no overhead doors would be modified.

Mr. Harris inquired if the property could be updated and used for something different. Mr. Bonner responded that it could be and that he realizes that there has been some controversy regarding this property, but noted that he was the one who did his homework, stepped up to the plate, and took a chance on purchasing the property to put it back into viable

use and back on the tax rolls. He noted the property had sat vacant for 15 years and he now has an opportunity to make viable use of the property that was once forgotten by everyone. He said he thought that the City would want to have someone make an investment in it.

Mr. Harris wondered if there could be something more viable there than what is proposed. Mr. Bonner responded that he had a number of different ideas and leads for the site, but sometimes in business some things do not pan out. He again mentioned to the Planning Board that he was the one who did his homework and checked with the Department of Environmental Conservation to make sure the site was environmentally clean. He said that it was not until after he did all of the leg work and background checking that other people became interested in the property. Mrs. Gervera asked if clearance from DEC had been provided and Mr. Bonner responded that the DEC has cleared the property.

Mrs. Freda asked if there were any improvements on the site that would trigger site plan review. Mr. Mix responded that as far as Staff could tell, there were no improvements that would trigger site plan approval. Mr. Bonner added that they are not planning to modify the structure at all.

Mr. Harris asked what happens to the soap and water runoff after the cars are washed and detailed. Mr. Bonner responded that they would be doing that work inside the building and that there are floor drains that would handle the runoff. He said that runoff would then go into the sanitary sewer. He also noted that there were oil drains to catch any oil and drips from the vehicles.

Mrs. Gervera asked what the hours of operation would be. Mr. Deroshia noted that they plan to operate 9:00-5:00 Monday through Friday, and 10:00-2:00 on Saturday. Mrs. Gervera then asked if they were planning to do any blacktop work at the site. Mr. Sweet noted that they will place crushed stone as needed to start and they hope to someday blacktop the property once their business was up and running. Mr. Lumbis noted that an expansion to the blacktop area would then kick in site plan review. Mrs. Gervera noted that paving would dress up the corner and improve the look of it over the crushed stone.

Mrs. Freda asked the applicant to clarify or define auto detailing. Mr. Sweet replied that it is basically washing and cleaning vehicles. He said that he cleans vehicles for various car dealers throughout the area and that Fort Drum customers are also a large part of his business.

Mrs. Gervera asked about the number of cars that would be on the site available for sale. Mr. Deroshia responded that his current operation has 15 to 20 cars for sale at any given time. Mrs. Gervera asked if there would be room on the site for that many vehicles. Mr. Deroshia said there was enough room as they were planning to use the property behind the building as well. He also noted that they plan on fixing the fence along the house that is located to the rear as it is in a state of disrepair.

Hearing no further discussion, Mr. Valianos then moved to recommend that the City Council approve the Special Use Permit request submitted by Mark Bonner to allow an auto sales lot and auto detailing operation located at 804 State Street, Parcel No. 12-06-322.000. The motion was seconded by Mr. Fipps.

Prior to voting on the motion, a discussion ensued regarding the possibility of requiring the applicant to pave the parking areas. Mrs. Gervera said she felt paving would improve the look of the property tremendously. Mr. Valianos said that his concern would be that the asphalt plants were not going to be open much longer and it may be difficult to require the applicant to pave at this point in time. Mr. Mix stated that if the Planning Board wanted to make that a condition, they could require the applicant to pave this fall if it is possible or by no later than next spring.

Mr. Deroshia stated that he is already putting \$15,000 to \$20,000 into the building for various cosmetic improvements and that if the Planning Board were to require him to pave the parking area, it would be very difficult financially to do. He said that would cost at least another \$15,000 to pave the parking area. He asked that the Planning Board let him paint and make other cosmetic improvements to the building and then improve the site with paving over time. He asked that he be allowed to take small steps first, get the business up and running, and then improve it with paving. He said he was concerned that if the Planning Board were to require him to pave the parking area, he would be out of business before he even started.

Mrs. Gervera stated that in light of the financial concerns, she is agreeable to allowing the application to proceed "as is." Mrs. Freda concurred by noting that she would not want to add additional costs during the first year the business owner is in business, but would eventually like to see the site improved. Mr. Valianos also agreed and said the Board should recommend approval for the project and take the owner at his word that he would further improve the property when the business is successful enough to allow it.

Hearing no further discussion on the issue, Mrs. Freda called for a vote on the motion that was on the table. The motion was approved with Mrs. Freda, Mrs. Gervera, Mr. Fipps and Mr. Valianos voting Yea; Mr. Harris abstained.

Mr. Sweet then asked if it would be possible to allow the detailing use to commence at the site before the Special Use Permit is granted. He said the lease at his current location is expired, and although he is staying there on a week to week basis, he would like to move to the new location as soon as possible. Mr. Mix responded that the approval authority for the Special Use Permit request is with the City Council and there is no way that Staff or the Planning Board can authorize the operation without their formal approval.

DISCUSSION – PLANNING BOARD AGENDAS

A discussion then followed regarding the Planning Board receiving the Planning Board Agendas electronically. Mr. Mix asked the Planning Board Members to review the applications and minutes on line to see what they thought of the format.

Mr. Valianos made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Harris seconded the motion and all voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 2:08 p.m.